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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
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O 061525Z JUL 78 ZFF-4
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1651
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MBABANE IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SHUM, RH, MZ
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: ZANU ESCAPEES

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SUMMARY: MORNING PAPERS OF JULY 7 GIVE A RUNDOWN ON INTERNAL RHODESIAN REACTIONS TO EXCAPE OF ZANU DISSIDENTS AS WELL AS THE FIRST INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THEM WHO REPORTEDLY SAID THE GROUP IS PLANNING A SWITCH OF ALLEGIANCE. STATEMENTS FROM SALISBURY INTIMATE THAT THE DISSIDENTS COULD COME INTO THE INTERNAL ACCORD. END SUMMARY.

PRESS ACCOUNTS STATE THAT A GIBSON JONATHAN SITHOLE, "UNOFFICIAL SPOKESMAN" FOR THE ZANU DEFECTORS, IN AN IN-
TERVIEW IN MBABANE STATED THAT THE ESCAPE HAD BEEN AC-
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COMPLISHED ALONE BY CHISELING A HOLE THROUGH THE BRICK WALL OF THEIR PRISON, THEN WITH FUNDS FROM "UNNAMED FRIENDS" THEY HAD TAKEN A BUS TO THE BORDER AT NOMAHASHA AND CROSSED INTO SWAZILAND. SITHOLE, REPORTEDLY A NEPHEW OF REVEREND SITHOLE, SAID THE GROUP PLANS "TO READ THE SITUATION BEFORE DECIDING" WHAT TO DO. HE ADDED " IT WILL BE UP TO EACH MEMBER OF THE GROUP TO DE-

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CIDE FOR HIMSELF ... I WILL BACK WHATEVER LEADER IS CHOSEN BY THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE." SITHOLE HINTED THAT OFFICERS HAD BEEN MADE FOR THEIR RETURN, BUT REITERATED THEY WERE STUDYING THE MATTER. SITHOLE WENT ON TO CRITICISE MUGABE, TONGOGARA AND THE FRONT LINE STATES SUPPORTING THEM. HE SAID THAT OTHER "COLLEAGUES" WOULD BE LEAVING MOZAMBIQUE. PRESS ASSESSMENT OF THIS INTERVIEW WAS THAT THE GROUP IS CONSIDERING A "SWITCH OF ALLEGIANCE." ONE ACCOUNT STATES THAT DESPITE SITHOLE'S INSISTENCE THAT THE ESCAPE WAS AN INSIDE JOB, THERE WAS A GROWING SUSPICION THAT IT WAS ARRANGED "WITH POWERFUL OUTSIDE SUPPORT."

2. MEANWHILE, MUZOREWA TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE IN JOHANNESBURG ON JULY 5 THAT THE DEFECTORS " SHOULD COME HOME AND MAKE INDEPENDENCE WORK". HE ADDED, "I HOPE THEY DON'T WASTE TIME GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE." HE SAID THAT THE UANC HAD KNOWN ABOUT THEIR DEFECTION FOR TEN DAYS. IN SALISBURY, ZAPU DEPUTY JOSIAH CHINAMANO IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID HE WASN'T SURPRISED ABOUT THE ESCAPE BECAUSE THE MEN WERE UNDER DEATH SENTENCE. HE SAID HE FELT THEY WOULD GO TO THE UK BUT, "KNOWING THIS LOT, I DON'T THINK THEY WILL BE ENTICED INTO A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE INTERNAL PARTIES BECAUSE THEY KNOW THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS REFLECTED WIDELY OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY AND INSIDE IT AS WELL."
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3. LATE REPORTS ON JULY 6 SAY THAT SENIOR ZANU OFFICIALS IN MAPUTO HAVE DENIED SITHOLE'S STORY AND CALLED IT A "PUT-UP JOB." EDDISON ZVOBGO IS SAID TO HAVE CLAIMED ONE OF THE SUPPOSED DEFECTORS, KANGAI, IS STILL IN MAPUTO AND THAT SITHOLE IS NOT THE NEPHEW OF REV. SITHOLE.
EDMONDSON

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